

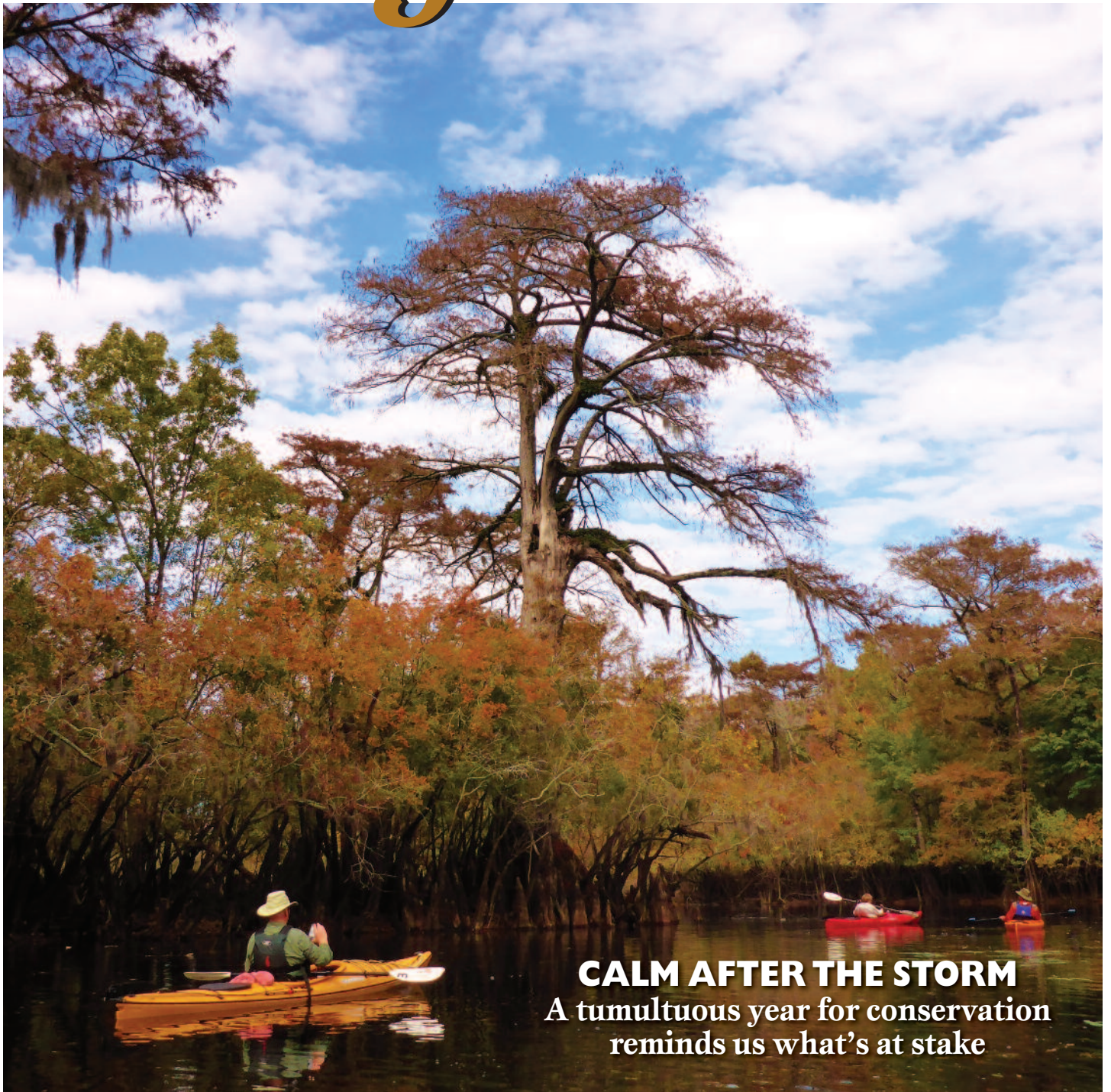


North Carolina
**WILDLIFE
FEDERATION**

Journal

WILD LIVES □ WILD PLACES

Fall 2015



CALM AFTER THE STORM

A tumultuous year for conservation
reminds us what's at stake

Deer Done Wrong



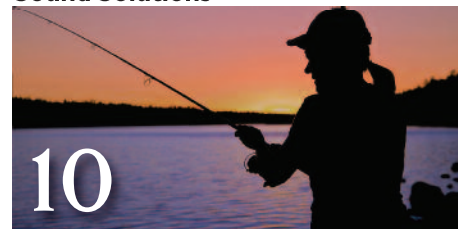
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BLESSED: Giving Thanks for North Carolina's Natural Sensations

BY TIM GESTWICKI, NCWF CEO

During this holiday season there is much to be thankful for at NCWF and across North Carolina. For starters, we've recently celebrated with the announcement of the North Carolina Conservation Achievement Awards winners, which you can read about starting on page 6. These individuals, agencies, and groups inspire all of us with their work to conserve natural resources, to protect our outdoor experiences, and to share these joys with the next generation.

For more inspiration, we only have to step outside in the Old North State. Over the years, we've written and re-worked and fussed over sort of an unofficial prayer here at the North Carolina Wildlife Federation. It's a beautiful expression of gratitude to the gifts of North Carolina, and a fine way to focus our attention on why we love this state—and why we're willing to work so hard for its blessings. Take a moment and add your own lines of gratitude.

We are blessed with a myriad of glorious Carolina colors, from the rainbow hues of flitting butterflies and forests dappled with sunlight, to spotted fawns and the flash of water glistening on duck wings.

We are thankful for the iridescent colors of brook trout, for first light, and for the brilliant scarlet of a cardinal perched on a hemlock bough.

Sounds abound in nature for which we give thanks. There are the calls of a whip-or-will in the evening, the gurgling of mountain streams, the honking of migrating geese in formation, the morning song of a dove.

We are thankful for the snort of a buck in the predawn darkness and the bugle of a rutting elk. We are thrilled by the excited sound of a child hooking their first fish, the hoot of the old barred owl. We are mesmerized by the howling red wolves in our pocosin swamps.

We are thankful for the smell of early morning in the woods, for the honeysuckle perfume of summer nights and the sharp smell of cedar. We love the scents of saltwater air, boggy peats and for venison chili simmering, blackberry pies baking and oysters steaming.

We are grateful for the crisp feel of fall in the field, for cool swimming holes, the tug and pull of a line tight with a fish on the end and dirt between our planting fingers. We give thanks for wet waders and warm summer beach breezes and for the rough bark feel of a hickory log as it is tossed on the campfire.

These are just a few examples of what we work for and for which we are thankful. We wish you and yours a healthy and happy holiday season and may all your outdoors and wildlife wishes come true. **NCWF**

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MARKETING/COMMUNICATIONS

Walker Marketing, Inc.

DESIGN/PRINTING

Designed by: Kimberly KC Schott, Red Gate Design
Printed by: Progress Printing, Lynchburg, VA
Published by: North Carolina Wildlife Federation

ABOUT THE COVER

Cover photographs: Slipping under the ancients on a paddle along the Black River's cypress groves (photo by MICHELLE ESHLEMAN). All others, unless noted: stock or courtesy of NCWF.

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North Carolina WILDLIFE FEDERATION Journal

WILD LIVES □ WILD PLACES

Fall 2015

Official publication, North Carolina Wildlife Federation (Affiliate of National Wildlife Federation)

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NORTH CAROLINA WILDLIFE FEDERATION

MISSION To protect, conserve and restore North Carolina wildlife and habitat.

VISION Our stewardship will result in a North Carolina with bountiful and diverse wildlife, including all species of wild flora and fauna, that is valued by its citizens and elected officials, and sustainably managed for future generations.

Our strength is derived from values driven leadership – science-based decision making; non-partisan approach to policy; stewardship of North Carolina's natural resources; inclusivity of broad wildlife interests and perspectives; and partnering with organizations and individuals who share our vision and our passion for wildlife.

GOALS Toward that vision, we will:

POLICY AND PROTECTION – Strongly influence state and federal policy that affects wildlife and habitat in North Carolina using established conservation models to guide our positions.

NETWORK OF IMPACT AND INVOLVEMENT – Foster a diverse, robust network of chapters, members, affiliates and partners; a network fortified by a variety of wildlife and outdoor interests.

EXPERIENCE AND LEARN – Enhance and expand opportunities for youth and adults that foster awareness and appreciation of wildlife and the important role healthy habitat plays in sustaining wildlife and humanity.

SIGNATURE PROGRAMS – Sponsor and support programs for the enjoyment and conservation of wildlife and habitat, including ethical and sustainable outdoor recreation pursuits.



by Robert Brown,
Vice Chair, NCWF
Board of Directors

Perhaps the most polite word to describe what happened in our legislature in the final days and hours of its long session would be “disheartening.” The moneyed interests of at most five to six individuals took precedence over the desires of hundreds of thousands of hunters and other conservationists, and most importantly, the health and future well-being of our state’s deer and elk herds.

Many of you may know the background of this story. In 2002 the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission, under the direction of NCWF’s Camo Coalition coordinator Dick Hamilton, discovered that about 100 people in North Carolina were keeping white-tailed deer in pens. Some had found or been given orphaned fawns and kept them as pets. Others had enclosed larger tracts of land and the deer within them or had purchased deer from out-of-state. Some people had exotics, like red, fallow or sika deer, and a few were raising white-tails to sell to hunting operations on the Cherokee Reservation or out-of-state.

Hunting behind a high fence, also known as canned hunting, is illegal in North Carolina. Our state constitution embraces the Public Trust Doctrine. In fact, our laws state that “the wildlife resources of the state belong to the people of the state as a whole,” and hold that no person shall “take, possess, buy, sell or transport any wildlife – whether dead or alive or in part.... except as specifically permitted by this subchapter.” Since 100 of these facilities already existed, the WRC established regulatory control over them, with requirements for operation of the facilities and semi-annual inspections. The permit fee was \$50 year. The Wildlife Commission spent \$247,000 buying out most of the farms, reducing their number to 37. Due to the outbreak of Chronic Wasting Disease in other states, the Wildlife Commission banned importation of deer and did not grant new facility permits. Farmers were still allowed to sell their deer to out-of-state buyers.

The commercial deer farm owners were told that if their farms were disease-free for five years (the USDA standard), they would be permitted to expand, import deer, and that new farms would be permitted. But by that time CWD had broken out in both penned and wild herds in Pennsylvania, a state with identical regulations. In 2014, under the McCrory administration, the Wildlife Commission was about to meet the deer farmers’ demands when CWD was detected in Virginia. The commission then appointed a CWD Task Force of scientists and deer farmers to study the issue. Dick Hamilton and I served on that task force. After three lengthy days of presentations and discussion, which included experts from other states, the group could not come to a consensus. Recommendations made by individual members to Wildlife Commission director Gordon Meyers were not made public even to the task force members.

That fall, Representative Roger West, chair of the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Appropriations committee, inserted a rider in the 2014-2015 Budget Act. It called for transferring regulatory authority over deer farms from the Wildlife Commission to the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (ACS). It opened the state borders to importation on July 1, 2017, provided for permitting new deer farms, allowed for the sale of antlers, antler velvet, and hides, and insisted that herd health standards could not be more stringent than those of the USDA. Our CAMO Coalition sent out action alerts, and legislators were inundated with emails and letters complaining about the rider. The transfer of authority from the state wildlife agency to the ACS was removed, but the rest stayed. And the Wildlife Commission was instructed to report to the Agriculture and Forestry Awareness Study Commission regarding differences between the Wildlife Commission and USDA on herd health. In addition, the Wildlife Commission director and some wildlife commissioners were called before the ad hoc House Select Committee on Regulatory Authority and Operations of the commission. Legislators and deer farmers lambasted them, and no one else was allowed to speak. Neither the director nor the commissioners were allowed to respond. Subsequently, the Wildlife Commission issued two new deer farm permits.

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) is a transmissible neurological disease of deer and elk.



DR. TERRY KREEGER, WGFD AND CWD-INFO.ORG

In January 2015, Senator Brent Jackson introduced the 2015 Farm Act, a lengthy and complicated bill that included a section on deer farming. Section 14 required the transfer of regulatory authority from the Wildlife Commission to the ACS, expansion of facilities, issuance of new permits, sale of deer and products, and restricting health requirements to those of the USDA. The latter are notoriously weak, as CWD, a fatal prion disease, can lie dormant for far longer than five years, is passed through urine into the soil, and can be taken up by plants. One concession was made in that importation of cervids is banned until a live-animal test for CWD is developed.

Wildlife Commission director Meyers and ACS commissioner Troxler said they had not asked for this, but supported it and the agencies lobbied for it in the legislature. Deer farmers, led by Tom Smith, former CEO of Food Lion, and their lobbyists went door to door in the House and Senate. The NCWF, CAMO, the Quality Deer Management Association and a number of hunt clubs and conservation organizations such as the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and The Wildlife Society sent emails and wrote letters opposing these deer farming provisions. Dick Hamilton and I testified before the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee, and subsequently before the House Agriculture Committee and the House Finance Committee. Representative Jay Adams, (R-Catawba) took up our cause with a passion.

Though our cause seemed lost, the two-month delay in passing the state's 2015-16 budget gave us time to rally support, aided by a full-page NCWF ad (Wanted: Common Sense Conservation) in the *Raleigh News & Observer*. Our arguments were bolstered by the outbreak of CWD on a Texas deer farm and a \$1.6 million fine by the USFWS for some Ohio deer smugglers. Rep. Adams developed an alternative to the language of the Farm Act, and NCWF's Tim Gestwicki, Dick Hamilton, Tom Bean and I helped Rep. Adams educate House members about the bill. It was approved on September 24 with a vote of 88-13. On the required second vote on September 28, it passed 99-13.

We thought the wildlife resources of North Carolina had won a hard-fought victory, but the Senate refused to accept the change with a vote of 44-4 against it. President Pro Tem and House Speaker Tim Moore appointed a House/Senate Conference Committee. All seven members were pro-deer farming advocates, chaired by Senator Jackson and Representative Jimmy Dixon, and including Representative Roger West, the long-time champion of deer-farming. Their "compromise" was reported in less than half an hour and the original deer farming provisions offered by the Senate were re-inserted. The rules then called for an up-or-down vote on the entire Farm Act, and the House voted 70-44 to approve it with the deer farming provision, and the Senate followed with a vote of 44-2. Many House members said they simply could not tell their soybean growers and hog farmers they voted against the entire Farm Act due to its deer farming provisions.

In the midst of these last few days of the legislative session, there were threats of revenge, lies, name calling, and disparaging remarks made within the chambers, all aimed towards those opposing the expansion of deer farming. The arm-twisting and political maneuvering by Senator Jackson and his colleagues in the House were "disheartening." It is now unlikely that the law can be changed. We are concerned that as the deer farming industry grows in North Carolina, escapes will happen, the risk of disease to our wild deer herd will increase, illegal activity will ensue, and there may eventually be a call for more lenient regulations if not the approval of canned hunting.

Nonetheless, we have found new friends in the legislature who might help us with future battles, and we have alerted our hunting and conservation public to the nefarious actions of our legislators. Many will be up for re-election next year, and we are reminded of the NCWF bumper sticker:

"I Fish, I Hunt, I Vote."

THE JUST-OK, THE BAD AND THE UGLY



The long session in the North Carolina General Assembly lived up to its name this year as the legislature ran from January through September. Under the guise of “regulatory reform,” conservation checks and balances were gutted and resource agencies hand-cuffed. Sportsmen, wildlife enthusiasts, and everyday citizens were bewildered at the recklessness and over-reach of the majority party. Here’s an accounting of the disastrous session.

THE JUST OK

Water and land investments fared the best with increases in the natural resource trust funds for parks, clean water and farmland preservation. The final budget included increases in funding for state parks (\$6 million extra nonrecurring in 2015, \$4 million additional recurring in 2016 and beyond) and the Clean Water Management Trust Fund (\$5 million non-recurring in 2015), among other gains. On the horizon, H943, the NC Connect Bond Act, includes another \$75 million to \$100 million for state parks and attractions (out of a total \$2 billion) which is great news for the state’s parks. The funds are still lagging well behind historic funding levels, but this was a positive victory for land and water advocates. The Natural Heritage Program, however, was further crippled in its duty to assess species and habitat for conservation planning and prioritizing land protection efforts.

THE BAD

Outdoor Heritage Council

The Outdoor Heritage Act (OHC) was passed by large majorities in both Houses. The act contained several provisions related to structure and management of wildlife resources including the size limit on black bear and Sunday hunting. Section 2 of the bill creates a new 12-member Outdoor Heritage Council to advise the General Assembly on the promotion of outdoor activities for youth including hunting, fishing, and trapping to preserve the state’s outdoor heritage. The Council is independent of the existing Wildlife Resources Commission (WRC) except for budget and organizational purposes. The members each are appointed by the Speaker of the House, President Pro Tempore of the Senate, Governor, chair of the WRC, and the Commissioner of Agriculture. The OHC is authorized to expend funds from a new fund known as the Outdoor Heritage Fund which consists of voluntary donations and contributions of persons buying hunting and fishing licenses and others who are charged for the use of public lands.

The creation of this Council raises significant questions about why the WRC cannot incorporate these responsibilities into its ongoing programs. The WRC has the necessary statutory authority, trained personnel, and an existing Commission of 19 members representing the entire state. The idea of this new Council brings the unavoidable suspicion of redundancy and political patronage.

Marine Fisheries Enforcement

The state’s Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) has the opportunity to enter into an agreement with its federal counter-

part, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), whereby NMFS would fund DMF to ensure certain enforcement and oversight is carried out in federal and state waters. Unfortunately, in S 374, the General Assembly passed language that prevents DMF from entering into this Joint Enforcement Agreement. North Carolina is the only state along the southern and Gulf coasts to forego such funding, which would range from between \$250,000 and \$1,000,000 a year for work the state would be doing on its own.

THE UGLY


The most controversial environment-related bill in the waning days of the session was S513, Farm Act of 2015, a hodge-podge of mostly agriculture-related provisions. This issue is discussed at length elsewhere in this Journal.


H795 (SEPA Reform)

This bill eviscerated the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) while still leaving it nominally on the books. SEPA has been in place since 1972, embodying the commonsense principle that if a project receives state taxpayer money, including the gifting of state-owned land, or a state environmental review, it should be reviewed to minimize or eliminate natural resources impacts that would affect taxpayers. The review-triggering threshold for “significant expenditures” was raised to \$20 million and the thresholds for “land disturbing activities” and “major development project” to 10 acres. These changes means that most projects will no longer receive a comprehensive review.

House Bill 765, the Regulatory Reform Act of 2015

This legislation is arguably the worst environmental bill of the session because many of its provisions will increase risks for public health, the environment and North Carolina’s natural resources. Some parts of this legislation might have been improved with further study and a more focused debate during a future session. Others are inconsistent with North Carolina’s values and will allow more pollution of our air and water, degrade our land, harm wildlife, and jeopardize the health of families and communities.

Among its most dangerous actions is Section 4.31, which establishes that the policy of the State of North Carolina will be to disregard impacts to intermittent streams. North Carolina’s 50,000 miles of intermittent streams account for nearly half of our 112,000 total stream miles. Intermittent streams capture and filter pollutants and help keep waterways clean and healthy. Of the 13,000 miles of streams that supply public drinking water systems in North Carolina, more than 7,000 miles are intermittent, ephemeral, or other headwater streams. Brook trout, the only trout native to North Carolina, relies on small intermittent streams for spawning and nursery areas. At present, project developers are obligated to account for and offset damage to intermittent streams through mitigation or environmental restoration efforts. H765 removes this obligation and will accelerate the degradation and loss of intermittent streams. The proposed policy change fails to consider the dire consequences to North Carolina’s rivers, streams, fish, wildlife, and drinking water. 



2014 Award Winners Give Their Best to Save NC's Best

At the 2014 Governor's Conservation Achievement Awards banquet, the Wildlife Federation celebrated a few rare individuals who carry in their hearts a burning passion for conservation. These prestigious awards are a long-standing effort to honor individuals, governmental bodies, organizations, and others who have exhibited an unwavering commitment to conservation in North Carolina. These are the highest natural resource honors given in the state. By recognizing, publicizing, and honoring these conservation leaders—young and old, professional and volunteer—the North Carolina Wildlife Federation hopes to inspire all North Carolinians to take a more active role in protecting the natural resources of our state.

This year's winners are a who's who of conservation stalwarts, who work for species ranging from elk to falcons to songbirds and bear. They advocate for water quality and land stewardship issues, and help preserve unique ecosystems and connect youth to nature. The award winners include agency professionals, elected officials, non-profit leaders and emerging youth leaders.

For these dedicated North Carolinians, the things they treasure are worthy of their time and talent and commitment. They will not take lightly actions to harm the things they treasure. They do not sit idly by. They do not hold their tongues. They do not wait for others to act. They work for the things they treasure. For the things we all treasure. A crowd of nearly 300 gathered in Research Triangle Park to cheer on and honor those folks who want to change their world for the better—who have already changed their world for the better.

CONSERVATION HALL OF FAME

Dr. F. Eugene Hester ★ A lifetime achievement for work on fish and wildlife conservation. Hester held the highest positions in three separate divisions of the US Dept. of the Interior during his distinguished career.

CONSERVATIONIST OF THE YEAR

Philip Blumenthal ★ The consummate behind-the-scenes supporter and out front leader, Blumenthal has worked to shape non-profit organizations from The Nature Conservancy to the Sierra Club, and provide leadership training and financial support to NC's conservation movement as well as establishing the Wildacres Retreat conference center.

WILDLIFE CONSERVATIONIST OF THE YEAR

Kim DeLozier ★ DeLozier retired from the Great Smoky Mountains National Park in 2010 after 32 rewarding years of service in wildlife management. During his career, Kim's involvement primarily focused on nuisance black bear management, wild hog control, white-tailed deer management, small animal management (skunks, raccoons, bats), and re-introduction efforts for elk, peregrine falcons, river otters, and red wolves. Kim currently works for the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation as Conservation Program Manager for the eastern U.S.

SPORTSMAN OF THE YEAR

Frank Grainger ★ Long-time Cary businessman Frank Grainger serves as chair of the N.C. Sportsmen Caucus Advisory Council, and led an effort to raise more than \$100,000 for handicapped lifts and ATVs for the Wildlife Resources Commission to use in its handicapped hunter programs. He championed the Outdoor Heritage Act to focus statewide attention on outdoor activities for younger generations.

LAND CONSERVATIONIST OF THE YEAR

Harriett Hurst Turner & John Henry Hurst ★ When the brother and sister sold 290 acres of rare maritime forest land to North Carolina last year, it boosted the size of popular Hammocks Beach State Park in a deal that will also bring back to life a historic camp that will be used for nature education.

FOREST CONSERVATIONIST OF THE YEAR

Jim Sitts ★ The Appalachian Timber Manager for Columbia Forest Products has been a leader in forest sustainability. Sitts' work through Carbon Canopy provides the opportunity to qualified landowners to participate in carbon sequestration projects to fight climate change through the conservation management of working forests. It's the capstone of Sitts' 40-year career for forest conservation.

WATER CONSERVATIONIST OF THE YEAR

David E Hinton ★ Hinton is the Nicholas Professor of Environmental Quality at Duke University's Nicholas School of the Environment. In the laboratory and classroom, Hinton shapes a new generation of scientists. As an educator and resident of a critical Tar-Pamlico tributary watershed, Hinton demonstrates how science and outreach can shape a community's relationship to the waters that nourish human experience.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR

Kelsie Armentrout ★ A teacher at Hilburn Academy in Raleigh, Armentrout has done amazing work using camera traps to connect her students to wildlife through the eMammal program. She is a Kenan fellow and works with researchers at the Museum of Natural Sciences on lesson plans and best practices for using camera traps in the classroom.

CONSERVATION COMMUNICATOR OF THE YEAR

Coastal Review Online ★ Since its launch in 2012 as the only non-profit news service in Eastern North Carolina, Coastal Review Online has sent its professional journalists out to cover every major environmental or conservation issue on the N.C. coast, from the proliferation of wood pellet plants to the mysterious beachings of dolphins.

YOUTH CONSERVATIONIST OF THE YEAR

Henry Long ★ The rising 8th grader at Raleigh's Exploris School has helped lead efforts to collect data on eastern box turtles, and uses GIS to map turtle movements. He's served on the school team to measure its landfill wastes and research alternatives, and as a student Green Team leader he tracks the school's energy efficiency.

LEGISLATOR OF THE YEAR

Sen. Harry Brown ★ As the senior chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee, Senator Brown has led the effort to restore funding for land and water conservation. Under his leadership, funding for the Clean Water Management Trust Fund and other conservation trust funds has risen every year.

WILDLIFE VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

Jill Palmer ★ A tireless leader of the Matthews-based Habitat and Wildlife Keepers (HAWK), Palmer seems to be everywhere: leading kid's nature days, mentoring other activists as they seek wildlife habitat certifications, walking downtown Charlotte streets to monitor injured birds, or working to seek the first Native Plant certifications offered by UNC-Charlotte.

HUNTER SAFETY EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR

James G. Earp ★ 2015 marks 10 years of service for Earp, a former District 3 hunter educator of the year award recipient. Last year Earp surpassed more than 500 hours as a volunteer hunter educator, qualifying him as a Master Educator.

NCWF CHAPTER OF THE YEAR

Gaston County PAWS ★ The Piedmont Area Wildlife Stewards chapter continues to raise the bar as a NCWF chapter powerhouse. From assembling wood duck boxes and osprey nesting platforms to Youth Day functions and support of the Wildlife Resources Commission's enforcement efforts, PAWS makes its mark on conservation.



NCWF AFFILIATE OF THE YEAR

N.C. Falconers Guild ★ This club of falconry enthusiasts is actively involved in legislative issues and wildlife conservation outreach.

NATURAL RESOURCES SCIENTIST OF THE YEAR

Ron Sutherland, PhD ★ A conservation scientist for the Wild-lands Network, Sutherland is actively involved in both research and education. He is a tireless voice for the conservation of public resources, and was a leader in efforts to prevent the initial sale of NCSU's Hoffman Forest.

CONSERVATION ORGANIZATION OF THE YEAR

NC Chapter of The Nature Conservancy ★ The organization has a long, successful history in NC of protecting land and contributing to the State's gamelands system while working for forest management plans that benefit wildlife.

BUSINESS CONSERVATIONIST OF THE YEAR

Biltmore Estate ★ A model for corporate environmental excellence with its forest conservation work, solar energy, recycling and water conservation.

WILDLIFE ENFORCEMENT OFFICER OF THE YEAR

Master Officer Aaron Stronach ★ Master Officer Stronach is stationed in Polk County, NC and had a 100 percent conviction rate on his wildlife violation cases this year including major illegal baiting and poaching cases.

MARINE FISHERIES ENFORCEMENT OFFICER OF THE YEAR

Officer Justin Lott ★ Lott patrols the waters of Dare and Currituck counties, whose rich maritime legacy continues with a robust recreational and commercial fishing industry. Lott is known for keeping a keen eye for fishing violations, and has participated in educational and search and rescue operations, as well.

WINNER SPOTLIGHT



PICTURED (L TO R): DENR DIRECTOR OF LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS MATTHEW DOCKHAM, JOHN AND HARRIET HURST, NCWF VICE CHAIR DR. BOB BROWN

LAND CONSERVATIONISTS OF THE YEAR: HARRIET HURST TURNER & JOHN HENRY HURST

It's easier to enjoy North Carolina's remaining wild lands when you have easy access. Wild woods and wild beaches are easier to get to with a four-wheel-drive SUV or a boat or a beach house nearby. If you have the means, empty beaches and marsh creeks, herons and oyster-catchers, can be your daily companions. But if you don't....

That thought, that reality, kept Harriet Hurst Turner and John Henry Hurst hanging on to a dream, year after long year.

Last year, when this brother and sister sold 290 acres of rare maritime forest island to North Carolina, it boosted the size of popular Hammocks Beach State Park in a deal that will also bring back to life a historic camp that will be used for nature education.

Long ago they could have sold for far more. But long ago their great grandfather, John Lewis Hurst, had set aside the land, with its original owner, Dr. William Sharpe, as an educational camp for the North Carolina Teachers Association, an African-American teacher's organization. When black teachers couldn't share a water fountain with whites, these families ensured that they could share in the glory of a sunrise over a wild Carolina beach. It's a heritage of equality and conservation that was passed to the Turners and the Hursts long ago. And it's a legacy on Bear Island that current generations of North Carolinians now have the opportunity to share. For their steadfast vision of a wild stretch of beach open to black and white, rich and poor, of any and all means, Harriet Hurst Turner and John Henry Hurst are the 2014 Land Conservationists of the Year.

WINNER SPOTLIGHT



KIM DELOZIER RETIREMENT PLAN OF WORKING FOR WILDLIFE MAKES HIM A CONSERVATION HERO.

WILDLIFE CONSERVATIONIST OF THE YEAR: KIM DELOZIER

Kim DeLozier worked for the Great Smoky Mountains National Park for 32 years, and for 32 years DeLozier had his hands in some of the most complex, intriguing wildlife issues of the era. Black bears, wild hogs, river otter, peregrine falcons, elk, red wolves, skunks, deer—from reintroductions to re-locations to restoring vanished populations, DeLozier was the go-to, hands-on guy for a huge range of Great Smokies wildlife.

And then he retired, and DeLozier learned something about himself. After three decades of working on some of the thorniest, and most rewarding, wildlife issues of the Southern Appalachians, his heart was so wound up in the wildlife of the high country that he couldn't stop caring, couldn't stop thinking, couldn't stop working for wildlife.

And that's what this retiree has done ever since. DeLozier has worked with the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, North Carolina Wildlife Federation, The Conservation Fund, N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission and other partners to establish the first wildlife management area for elk in North Carolina in Maggie Valley in Haywood County. Thanks to DeLozier's biological training, educational efforts, and interpersonal skills, the Wildlife Commission and others have begun to recognize the conservation and economic benefits that a sustainable elk population can bring to western North Carolina.

Use it or lose it seems to be DeLozier's mantra. Use the expertise and insight and passion of 32 years of wildlife service—or see the high country lose its chance to thrive in an ever-challenging world. Kim DeLozier is the 2014 Wildlife Conservationist of the Year.

WINNER SPOTLIGHT



PICTURED (L TO R): NCWF IMMEDIATE PAST CHAIR CAROL BUIE JACKSON, GENE HESTER, NCWF VICE CHAIR DR. BOB BROWN

SPECIAL HALL OF FAME INDUCTION: F. EUGENE HESTER

In addition to the Conservation Achievement Awards, the 2014 gala event hosted a special induction into the North Carolina Conservation Hall of Fame. During his distinguished fish and wildlife career, F. Eugene Hester, of Wendell, held the highest positions in three separate divisions of the U.S. Department of the Interior. "We stand on the shoulders of conservation giants who went before us," said master of ceremonies T. Edward Nickens. "Our success is rooted in a foundation laid by the conservation heroes of yesterday, and no one fits that description better than F. Eugene Hester." Here is the remainder of the induction ceremony comments.

Gene Hester served at the highest levels of fish and wildlife policy for a quarter-century, during which the foundational elements of conservation policy were hammered into place. Endangered species, science-based management, the national wildlife refuge system—

all of these bear the fingerprints of Gene Hester. Talk about a local boy done good...

Hester grew up in Wendell, the 7th child of a 7th child, born on the 7th day of July, in 1931. Hester earned undergraduate and master's degrees from N.C. State University, and then his doctorate from Auburn University, and he has been working for wildlife since 1963, when he became the first leader of the Cooperative Fisheries Unit at NCSU. It was the first step in a career that he could hardly have dreamed of, and that has never been duplicated.

Hester went to Washington, D.C. in 1971, to head up the Fish and Wildlife Service's Division of Fishery Research, and ultimately spent nearly a decade heading up the research division of the Fish and Wildlife Service. This was in the infant years of the Endangered Species Act, and Hester's deft handling of the many controversies and details about the ESA no doubt strengthen that cornerstone of policy. And over the next 25 years his career would be unmatched by any other Fish and Wildlife Service employee in history. He held the highest non-appointed positions in the Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Park Service, and the National Biological Service. He worked with Republicans and Democrats. He served under eight presidents. Upon his retirement, his position in the Senior Executive Services had a federal government civil service classification equivalent to an admiral in the U.S. Navy.

And through it all, Hester has been a dedicated educator. A renowned photographer, his images frequently grace the pages of *Wildlife in North Carolina*, where he's had nearly 50 cover shots, plus wildlife calendars, and some 60 other magazines. His research and writing on wood ducks has informed and inspired countless young biologists. He's recently published a book on Hootie, an owl he befriended five years ago.

And when it was all said and done, to the delight of his friends and family, Gene Hester came home. He has always and forever been a Wendell boy, and happily, Hester now splits time between Wendell and his long-time adopted home of northern Virginia.

And we have been blessed by the work and the legacy and the art of Eugene Hester. He will be the first to tell you that he stood on the shoulders of conservation giants as well, on the shoulders of the likes of Aldo Leopold and Tom Quay. But tonight, Gene Hester stands apart. He is an inductee of the North Carolina Conservation Hall of Fame.

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New Board Member Elected

Steve Jester, AIA, vice president of water strategy, hydropower licensing and lake services for Duke Energy, was elected to the Federation's board of directors on September 12. Jester is responsible for strategic water resource planning, compliance with existing FERC licenses for hydro generation assets and seeking new FERC licenses for those assets. He is also responsible for shoreline, regulatory, community and stakeholder matters, and public safety and recreation associated with the company's reservoirs. Jester has held a variety of leadership roles in several areas of Duke Energy, including corporate facilities, corporate real estate, supply chain, global legal, government affairs and energy policy, and rates and regulatory affairs.

"Steve is a welcome addition to our team," said Federation chairman John Robbins. "His expertise, positive approach to meeting challenges, teaming philosophy and passion for what we do will be instrumental in helping achieve our strategic plan and upholding core values."

The North Carolina native graduated from the College of Architecture at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. He is a registered architect and real estate broker, and has completed a number of business and leadership studies. Steve and his wife, Amanda, reside in Charlotte and their sons Mitchell and Phillip are students at UNC-Chapel Hill.



A Fumble on Flounder

Through NCWF's Sound Solutions campaign we continue to focus on the sustainability of key fish species in North Carolina's sounds and estuaries. As we continue our efforts to work with all interested parties on these challenges, however, there is resistance from some groups in the commercial fishing industry, some members of the legislature, and the Marine Fisheries Commission (MFC).



In late September, MFC Chair Sammy Corbett reported that he would not call a special meeting to protect the southern flounder prior to a regularly scheduled meeting for November. His decision came after the August commission meeting in which the commissioners were set to decide on the appropriate southern flounder supplement measures. Instead of making its decision, the commission was waylaid by Representative Steinburg (R-Washington), who was not on the agenda, but was allowed to speak to the commission. In his statement to the commission, Steinburg warned that legislative members were watching this vote "very, very carefully."

Further, Rep. Steinburg directed the commission to a letter being sent from 13 members of the General Assembly requesting the DENR secretary to rescind the commission's supplement process authority. Then, after a lunch break, the secretary sent his attorney to make an about-face statement agreeing with these 13 legislators that the supplement process was not the proper process, after he had authorized the supplement process last spring. The meeting was thrown into chaos, and the chair called for a break. After the break, due to the MFC's attorney's interpretation of the secretary's statement, the chair decided to postpone the supplement agenda item. At the end of the meeting, despite these rapidly escalating events, Corbett said he would schedule a special meeting for September 16. As September came and went, the word from Corbett was that it would happen by October 15 as he could not find a time in which all commissioners could attend. Another reason given was that he had not heard back from the DENR secretary concerning his guidance moving forward.

Corbett's final decision brought to an end any possibility of the flounder being protected for this year. The DMF director and other marine fisheries scientists and experts have called for at least a 40-percent reduction in total harvest of the southern flounder. This decision makes it more likely North Carolina will encounter a crisis in its southern flounder fishery, a crisis that will be the direct result of the decisions of the MFC chair and the DENR secretary. Both of these individuals were appointed by, and answer to, Governor McCrory. There has been no public comment on this matter by the governor.

With little hope to protect the flounder this season, we must look forward to ensuring that the stock is put on a sustainable footing next year. All of our focus will be on the November meeting (which took place as this issue was going to press) when the commission will decide on the reduction methods for the foreseeable future. With North Carolina's regulatory process being one of the slowest in the country, the supplement could be the law of the land for the next 3 to 5 years. NCWF will continue to keep pressure on the commission and DMF to institute scientifically sound and effective measure to protect the southern flounder. This fishery needs true stewardship and needs it quickly.



NCWF Scholarship Recipients the Next Generation of Wildlife Professionals

The NCWF scholarship program represents a cornerstone of our outreach to the community with an eye to our future conservationists. The five-decades-long effort has provided hundreds of students with grants to further their education in the conservation field. Here are this year's recipients:

Allen Bailiff. A senior at North Carolina State University, Bailiff is a Fisheries & Wildlife Conservation major who aspires to make a positive difference in the world-wide conservation effort. His specific interests include minimizing the effects of global warming on coral reefs. In his spare time Bailiff enjoys reading, listening to music, and outdoor activities.

Ashleigh McCord. McCord is a second-year graduate student of Coastal Environmental Management at Duke University. McCord hopes to spend her career addressing the impacts of coastal communities on marine wildlife and habitats. She is a summer intern at the North Carolina Coastal Federation where she is contribut-

ing to a variety of coastal advocacy and education projects.

Brendan Runde. A graduate student at North Carolina State University with a major in Fisheries and a minor in Statistics, Runde's intended career is performing research aimed at ensuring the long term health of aquatic ecosystems and the resources therein. His goal is to help protect our waterways and their inhabitants so that future generations may enjoy them as he has.

Henry Raab. Raab is pursuing his PhD through the Coastal Resources Management program at East Carolina University. He believes his scientific background and willingness to lead and work with people will make him an excellent resource manager for a government or state agency. His goal is to conserve the things he loves not only for himself, but for his kids and generations to come.

Cori Speights. A graduate student at East Carolina University, Speights is interested

in aquatic invaders and their effects on commercial fisheries. She plans on pursuing a PhD in Ecology and sees herself joining the work force as a natural resource conservation ecologist. Speights volunteers for science education through Sound Rivers.

Justin Fischer. Majoring in Biology, Fischer is a graduate student at Appalachian State University. Fischer's goal after graduation is to attain an agency or non-profit field biologist position. He aims to work with non-game species and habitat restoration. In his spare time he enjoys bird watching, exploring streams, reading, and learning Spanish. His scholarship is supported by Rocky River Trout Unlimited.

Kayla Herrera. A senior at North Carolina State University, Herrera seeks a career as a wildlife enforcement officer with the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission. As she learns in most of her classes, creating management regimes and regulations of natural resources is only half the battle. Enforcement of those regulations is just as important.

Orvis and NCWF Are a Picture-Perfect Match

The Orvis Company and the North Carolina Wildlife Federation teamed up to raise funds for crucial habitat preservation and restoration projects on the Catawba River through an Instagram photo-sharing campaign called #MyOutdoorsCharlotte. When users shared a picture of themselves enjoying the North Carolina outdoors using the hashtag #MyOutdoorsCharlotte, Orvis donated \$1 per photo to help raise donations for conservation efforts. Additionally, local influencers and notable personalities also supported the campaign. We're proud to announce the campaign raised a total of \$2,500. The donation made by The Orvis Company will go towards continuing to help support local conservation efforts on the Catawba River.



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CHECK OUT OUR CHAPTERS!

For more information on how you can participate, contact Christopher North at chris@ncwf.org.



Capital Chapter



Concord Wildlife Alliance



CROWN (Charlotte Reconnecting Ourselves With Nature)



F.I.S.H. (Fayetteville Increasing Sustainable Habitat)



PAWS (Gaston County Piedmont Area Wildlife Stewards)



HAWK (Habitat and Wildlife Keepers)



Lake James Area Wildlife and Nature Society



Lake Norman Wildlife Conservationists



Mountain Island Lake Wildlife Stewards



Mountain WILD



PACT (Protecting, Advocating and Conserving)



PAWC (Pamlico Albemarle Wildlife Conservationists)



South Wake Conservationists



The Albemarle Conservation and Wildlife Chapter

NO LONE WOLVES IN NCWF CHAPTERS

Ever felt like you were on your own conservation crusade? A lone wolf trying to stem the tide of environmental destruction? From encouraging neighbors' recycling habits and creating a wildlife habitat in your yard to signing petitions for new parks and feeding the birds or volunteering as a youth hunter education instructor, you are trying, doing your part, but still you feel like it's just not enough and that no one else cares? We've heard this perspective from many of our members over the years. It's one of the reasons why we established the NCWF chapter network, which is flourishing from the mountains to the coast. Chapter volunteers make the difference for wildlife conservation when it comes to on-the-ground conservation work, local engagement and awareness building. These chapters do the heavy lifting of conservation work thanks to members with common conservation goals working in unison to accomplish them.

We are thankful for the current support that we have for our conservation projects and continue to seek even more for the future. Here are a few quotes from the field underscoring Margaret Mead's famous statement that rings truer than ever for NCWF chapter volunteers: "A small group of thoughtful people can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

"Do a little and have fun!" —Hank Trufan, HAWK. Hank is the HAWK handyman who has a knack for fixing things.

"We care about the lake, we care about the environment and we care about this area." —Denise Bardsley, Lake Norman Wildlife Conservationists to a reporter at a restoration project.

"We planted 75 to 80 native plants covering about 1200 square feet. We also enhanced the garden with decorative mushrooms, butterfly pools, and toad abodes during one of our monthly meetings." —Stephanie Wage, South Wake Conservationists talking about the pollinator garden the chapter established.

"Construction of recycling bins for fishing line has been a very successful project that is having a positive influence on wildlife habitat." —Michele Aydtlett, Albemarle Conservation and Wildlife Chapter.

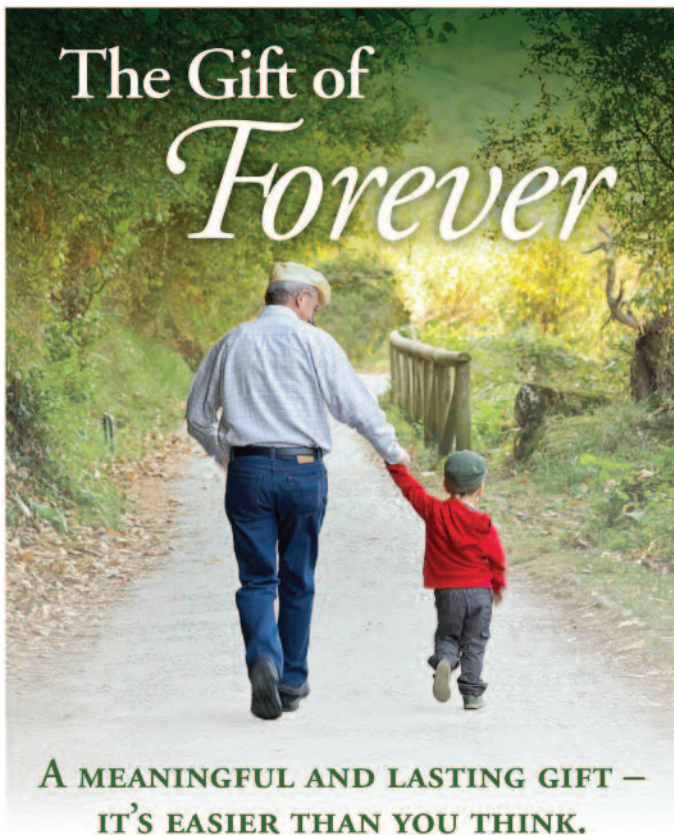
"Blounts Creek is having its day in court, we are meeting folks at the Intracoastal Waterway Festival in Belhaven, and we are nearing completion of our handicapped hunting blind." —Attila Nemezc, talking to a crowd about the recent efforts of the Pamlico Albemarle Wildlife Conservationists.

"There are several common traits among HAWK volunteers: curiosity, creativity, resourcefulness, and a sense of urgency." —Daphne Traywick, HAWK

"Hello, LNWC volunteers! I want to thank you all again for the invaluable assistance you offered at our Wildlife Festival. You all were one of the best teams of volunteers that I've ever worked with. I was impressed by how you pulled together to make things work, despite the conditions. Your assistance helped us set a new organizational fundraising record!" —Billy Wilson, Lake Norman Wildlife Conservationists, thanking volunteers after a very rainy fundraiser.

At NCWF, when it comes to environmental issues, what matters most isn't whether you take to the woods or the fields or the waters with your hand holding a kayak paddle, or a fishing rod, or a gun, or a bird guide, or a camera. What matters most is whether you are willing to put down what you hold in your hand and work together, with one voice, one movement, to save the one thing that binds us all together: wild land—be it urban or rural—for wildlife.

If you want to be involved and make a difference, find a local NCWF wildlife chapter near you by going to www.ncwf.org and click on "chapters." If there isn't a chapter in your community and you want to be involved with establishing one, contact Chris North at chris@ncwf.org.



You can leave a powerful legacy for the wildlife and wild places you love. Naming NCWF in your will or estate plan will make a true difference for wildlife and habitat for generations to come.

ADD NCWF TO YOUR WILL OR LIFE INSURANCE POLICY. Many of our members have added NCWF to their will or life insurance policy by simply designating a dollar amount or a percentage. No matter the amount, such a gift enables future generations to enjoy North Carolina's magnificent wildlife and stunning wild places.

ESTABLISH A CHARITABLE GIFT ANNUITY. Create income for you or a loved one today, and leave a legacy forever. This option provides a guaranteed fixed income for life and substantial tax savings. (Age and income requirements apply.) Given the volatility of today's markets, an NCWF annuity adds financial security and an investment in the future of wildlife.

THE FIRST STEP IS EASY. Call, email or drop a note to development director Dom Canavarro, for a confidential and personal proposal that meets your family's needs. Contact Dom at 1024 Washington St., Raleigh, NC 27605; dom@ncwf.org; or (919) 833-1923.

Charlie Shaw Society



NCWRC

John Robbins, owner of Greathorn Properties in Concord, and a long-time philanthropist and sportsman is the current chair of the Charlie Shaw Society. He encourages others to join him in support of the North Carolina Wildlife Federation.



Current Members

Members in the Charlie Shaw Society are our most dedicated supporters—generous members who have made a commitment to the work and programs of the North Carolina Wildlife Federation through an annual contribution of \$1,000 or more. Gifts can be made in one lump sum or in any number of smaller contributions within a calendar year, and can be directed to any Federation program that is of interest to the donor.

To learn more about the Charlie Shaw Society and benefits of membership, please visit our website at www.ncwf.org, or Dom Canavarro, Development and Operations Director, at (919) 833-1923; dom@ncwf.org.

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THE Season

Jeff Beane's GUIDE TO
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DECEMBER

December 14-January 5: Annual Christmas Bird Counts are held around the state. For information on how to participate in the world's largest and oldest organized wildlife survey (this year's count will be the 116th), contact your local Audubon chapter or the Carolina Bird Club, or visit <https://www.audubon.org/content/join-christmas-bird-count> or www.carolinabirdclub.org

December 15: Tiger and Mabee's salamanders begin breeding with the first warm or heavy winter rains. These declining amphibians depend on a few remaining ephemeral ponds in the Sandhills and Coastal Plain.

December 16: Black bears begin their winter dormancy, but they may be active during warm periods in winter. Especially in our large coastal refuges, where food is abundant, bears may remain active virtually all winter.

December 19: Migration peaks for snow geese and Canada geese.

December 21: Winter is coming! Solstice will be at around 11:49 p.m. Eastern Standard Time.

December 23-24: Ursid meteor shower peaks tonight, but the nearly full moon will somewhat inhibit viewing.

December 25: It's a full moon for Christmas!

December 26: Most herbaceous plants have been killed by frost, but Christmas fern and running-cedar still add a touch of holiday spirit to the forest floor.

December 31: Huge flocks of yellow-rumped warblers can be seen in the red-cedar and wax-myrtle thickets along our coast.

JANUARY

January 1: New Year's resolutions? Consider spending more time outdoors!

January 2: Most butterflies have migrated, hibernated, or been killed by freezing temperatures, but on warm January days, especially in the Coastal Plain, adults of a few hardy species, including the monarch, red admiral, American lady, common buckeye, and variegated fritillary, may be seen flying.

January 3: Watch for rare visits from winter finches like red crossbills, common redpolls, and evening grosbeaks.

January 4-5: Quadrantid meteor shower peaks. Dress warm and find a dark, open spot of sky.

January 7: Some small mammals enter deep torpor or otherwise sleep most of the winter away, but shrews remain active in underground tunnels or beneath the snow. Their high metabolism requires that these tiny predators eat more than their weight in insects and other food daily to survive.

January 10: Migration is peaking for mallards and black ducks.

January 12: Great horned owls are nesting.

January 13: Harbor seals, and occasionally other seal species, may be seen along our coast in winter, and sightings have increased in recent years. Oregon Inlet is a good place to see these marine mammals, either swimming or hauled out on spoil islands.

January 14: Waterfowl populations are peaking along the coast. Pea Island and Lake Mattamuskeet National Wildlife Refuges are good waterfowl viewing areas. Swanquarter and Cedar Island ferries provide good viewing opportunities for sea ducks.

January 15: An oddball among turtles, the eastern chicken turtle typically deposits its eggs in fall or winter (nearly all turtles nest in spring or early summer). It is the only reptile ever documented as having nested in January in North Carolina.

January 16: Mourning doves are beginning their courtship flights.

January 17: Black bear cubs are being born.

January 19: White-tailed deer have begun shedding their antlers.

January 20: The enormous winter flocks of red-winged blackbirds along our coast are an impressive sight. The large coastal refuges, like Pocosin Lakes, Alligator River, and Mattamuskeet are good spots to view this spectacle.

January 23: Most flycatchers and other heavily insectivorous birds winter in the tropics, but the eastern phoebe hangs around all year, switching its winter diet to berries along with whatever winter insects it can find.

January 27: Watch for humpback whales and other marine mammals along the coast, particularly the Outer Banks.

January 30: Wood frogs breed during winter rains. Like many winter-breeding amphibians, these handsome frogs of our Mountains and Foothills are highly freeze-tolerant.

January 31: Chorus frogs will have begun calling over most of the state: upland chorus frogs in the Piedmont; Brimley's, southern, and ornate chorus frogs in the Coastal Plain; and spring peepers over much of the state.

FEBRUARY

February 2: Groundhogs are still hibernating, so you probably won't see one out looking for its shadow (although it is possible on a warm day).

February 3: Spring waterfowl migrations begin. Atlantic sturgeon are migrating to their upriver spawning areas.

February 5-6: The Carolina Bird Club will hold its winter meeting in Litchfield Beach, SC. For more information, visit www.carolinabirdclub.org.

February 7: The Neuse River waterdog, a large, permanently aquatic salamander found only in the Neuse and Tar river systems, is most readily encountered during this time of year.

February 9: Striped skunks begin their mating season; males are out wandering in search of females.

February 10: Spring gray squirrel litters are born.

February 11: Mourning cloaks fly on warm winter days. These interesting butterflies overwinter as adults and have the longest adult lifespan (up to 11 months) of any eastern U.S. butterfly.

February 12-15: Great Backyard Bird Count. For information on how to participate in this popular and wide-reaching citizen-science effort, visit <http://gbbc.birdcount.org/>